

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-58. (Canceled)

59. (Currently amended) An siRNA according to claim 79 52, wherein the sense and antisense strands are of the same length.

60. (Currently amended) An siRNA according to claim 79 52, wherein each said strand has a length of 19, 20, 21 or 22 nucleotides.

61-66. (Canceled)

67. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 84 66, which is formulated for oral or nasal administration.

68. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 84 66, wherein said carrier is a lipophilic carrier or vesicle.

69. (Currently amended) A method of treating an allergic disease in a patient in need of such treatment, which comprises administering to the patient an siRNA as claimed in claim 79 52.

70. (Currently amended) A method of treating an allergic disease in a patient in need of such treatment, which comprises administration to the patient of a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 84 66.

71. (Original) A method according to claim 70, in which the administration is oral, inhalational or nasal.

72. (Currently amended) A method of treating a disease in a patient in need of such treatment, which comprises administering to the patient an siRNA according to claim 82 52 or a pharmaceutical formulation according to claim 84 66, wherein said

disease is selected from the group consisting of asthma, non-atopic asthma and rhinitis.

73-78. (Canceled)

79. (New) A therapeutically active isolated double-stranded short interfering ribonucleic acid (siRNA) consisting essentially of a sense strand having a nucleotide sequence length of 18 to 23 nucleotides and an antisense strand having a nucleotide sequence length of 18 to 23 nucleotides

said nucleotide sequence of said sense strand has a sequence identity of at least 80% to that of a contiguous nucleotide sequence of length 18 to 23 nucleotides which is contained in the messenger RNA (mRNA) sequence encoded by one of the human, mouse and rat STAT6 nucleotide sequences defined herein respectively as SEQ ID No 10, SEQ ID No 12 and SEQ ID No 14; and

said nucleotide sequence of said antisense strand having a sequence complementarity of at least 80% to that of a contiguous nucleotide sequence of length 18 to 23 nucleotides which is contained in one of the RNA sequences encoded by one of the human, mouse and rat STAT6 nucleotide sequences defined herein respectively as SEQ ID No 10, SEQ ID No 12 and SEQ ID No 14,

at least one of said sense strand and said antisense strand having a sequence identity of at least 80% to the corresponding strand of SEQ ID No 1, whereby said siRNA has the property of at least repressing expression of STAT6 mRNA and protein *in vitro*.

80. (New) A double-stranded siRNA capable of at least repressing expression of STAT6 mRNA and protein *in vitro*. said siRNA having a sense strand with a sequence identity of at least 80% to the corresponding strand of SEQ ID No 1.

81. (New) A double-stranded siRNA capable of at least repressing expression of STAT6 mRNA and protein *in vitro*, said siRNA having an antisense strand with a sequence identity of at least 80% to the corresponding strand of SEQ ID No 1.

82. (New) A double-stranded siRNA comprising SEQ ID No. 1.

83. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a double-stranded siRNA as claimed in claim 79, the composition being formulated for the treatment of an allergic disease or a disease of the respiratory tract and further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent, carrier or adjuvant.

84. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a double-stranded siRNA as claimed in claim 80, the composition being formulated for the treatment of an allergic disease or a disease of the respiratory tract and further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent, carrier or adjuvant.

85. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a double-stranded siRNA as claimed in claim 81, the composition being formulated for the treatment of an allergic disease or a disease of the respiratory tract and further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent, carrier or adjuvant.

86. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a double-stranded siRNA as claimed in claim 82, the composition being formulated for the treatment of an allergic disease or a disease of the respiratory tract and further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent, carrier or adjuvant.